

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 are pending in the case.

It is the belief of the Applicants that the claims of the present invention are directed to a common subject matter and the search and examination of the entire application can be made by the Examiner without serious burden.

The Examiner stated that Species I-V are either (1) not capable of use together, or can be materially different designs, mode of operation or effect (2) the species do not overlap in scope (i.e., are mutually exclusive) and (3) the species are not obvious variants. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. For example, the platform of FIG. 1 can easily be adapted to have stairs in FIG. 6. In addition, the planking of FIG. 1 can be replaced by the plates of FIG. 5. In addition the modules of FIG. 4 may simply include platform devices of FIG. 1 coupled together. It is respectfully submitted that the configurations depicted may be employed together for the most part as options on the structure recited in the independent claims. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the restriction requirement and Examiner all of the claims together.

It is recognized that in order for this paper to be responsive to the Office Action, an election must be made. In the Office Action of February 2, 2007, restriction has been required to one of the following two species of claims:

Species I (FIGS. 1-3) 1-8, 10, 11, 13, 15-20, 22, 23, 25;

Species II (FIG. 4) 27-34, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44;

Species III (FIG. 5) 9, 12, 21, 24, 35, 38;

Species IV (FIG. 6) 14, 26, 40;

Species V (FIG. 7)


Accordingly, claims of Group (I) (claims 1-8, 10, 11, 13, 15-20, 22, 23, 25) are elected for examination at this time with traverse. Should the Examiner not reconsider the present position, Applicant reserves the right to pursue the remaining claims by way of separate divisional applications.

It should be noted that independent claims 1 and 15 are included in Species I and should be examined together along with all of the dependent claims dependent thereon (e.g., claims 1-26 should be Examined together). Claims 1 and 15 should be considered generic to the remaining dependent claims, 2-14 and 16-26, respectively. Reconsideration is requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the restriction requirement. Early and favorable action of the case is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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